

Disability Inclusion Policy

Mission

Serve DC, the DC Commission for National and Community Service, encourages individuals with physical or mental disabilities to participate as AmeriCorps members through AmeriCorps programs operating in the District of Columbia. We encourage a diverse membership that includes people with disabilities to participate as national and community service members through our many programs.

Definition of Disability

According to the ADA, the term "disability" means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities, a record of having such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. "Major life activities" means functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, etc. Additionally, a "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodations, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the program.

Policy

Under Federal law, any program which receives federal funds is required to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In compliance with the Federal law, all AmeriCorps programs prohibit any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities in recruitment, as well as in service. No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the program, services, or activities of the program, or be subjected to discrimination by the program. Nor shall the program exclude or otherwise deny equal services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability.

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a program site that will enable a qualified applicant or AmeriCorps member with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential service functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in service equal to those of individuals without disabilities.

All AmeriCorps programs shall make reasonable accommodations in practices and/or procedures when the accommodations are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability. Accommodations are "reasonable" when they are practical or feasible. The program does not have to provide reasonable accommodations that would impose undue hardship on the operation of the program. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), an undue hardship must be based on an individualized

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assessment of current circumstances that show that a specific reasonable accommodation would cause significant difficulty or expense.

Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation Funds

Serve DC offers reasonable accommodation funds to assist AmeriCorps*State, AmeriCorps*National, and AmeriCorps Education Award Only program sites operating in the District of Columbia. The following is the procedure for requesting reasonable accommodation funds.

1. Program Directors of AmeriCorps*State, AmeriCorps*National or AmeriCorps Education Award Only program must complete the Serve DC Application for Reasonable Accommodation Funds. In addition, the applicant must provide two cost estimates from two different vendors. To get a copy of the Serve DC Application for Reasonable Accommodation Funds, please contact Natasha Marshall, Training and Technical Assistance Manager at natasha.marshall@dc.gov.
2. Submit the application to:
 - a. Training and Technical Assistance Manager
Serve DC
One Judiciary Square
441 4th St, NW
Suite 1040 South
Washington, DC 20001

Review Process for Reasonable Accommodation Funds Request

1. Serve DC's Training and Technical Assistance Manager will receive all applications confidentially.
2. Serve DC's Training and Technical Assistance Manager will review all applications for completeness and accuracy.
3. Serve DC's Training and Technical Assistance Manager and the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee will review the request for funding. A decision will be rendered within ten (10) working days. The committee will take into account the following factors:
 - a. Will the reasonable accommodation enable the individual to perform the essential functions of the position?
 - b. Is the accommodation an undue hardship to Serve DC?
 - i. type and cost of the accommodation needed
 - ii. impact of the accommodation funds request upon the disability inclusion funds at Serve DC
 - iii. overall size of the program requesting funds, with respect to the number of AmeriCorps members, and the number, type and location of its facilities
 - c. Is the cost for the reasonable accommodation, reasonable?
 - d. Will the accommodation benefit other AmeriCorps members?

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- e. Will the accommodation fundamentally alter the program design?
4. If Serve DC approves the funds for reasonable accommodation, the program must submit invoices directly to Serve DC's Training and Technical Assistance Manager. The invoices will be paid within approximately 30 days from receipt.
5. If Serve DC denies the funds for reasonable accommodation, the AmeriCorps member or program can file a grievance to have Serve DC's decision evaluated by Serve DC's Review Committee for final determination.

Grievance Procedure

Serve DC has adopted an internal grievance procedure for prompt and expeditious resolution of complaints for the denial of a reasonable accommodation. Requests for a reasonable accommodation funds that have been denied by Serve DC may appeal the decision by filing a grievance with Serve DC within sixty (60) days of the denial of the request. The following outlines the grievance procedure.

1. Complainant will complete the Serve DC Reasonable Accommodation Grievance Form.
2. Submit the application to:
 - a. Training and Technical Assistance Manager
Serve DC
One Judiciary Square
441 4th St, NW
Suite 1040 South
Washington, DC 20001
3. Complainant may also request to have an informal confidential presentation of their grievance prior to the final decision. This may be done in person or through a telephone conference.
4. Serve DC's Training and Technical Assistance Manager receives grievance and forwards it to the Serve DC Review Committee. The Review Committee will consist of three members of the Serve DC Commission.
5. A review of the initial decision shall be conducted within ten (10) working days after the grievance is filed.
6. The Review Committee will review the complainant's initial request for reasonable accommodation funds, the initial decision rendered by Serve DC, the complainant's grievance form and, if requested, the informal confidential presentation by the complainant.
7. After full consideration of the grievance, the Review Committee will issue a written decision explaining the reasoning behind its decision. A copy of this decision will be forwarded to the complainant.
8. The Training and Technical Assistance Manager shall maintain the confidentiality of all files and records relating to the grievance filed, unless disclosure is authorized or required by law.
9. The decision of the Serve DC Review Committee can be further appealed directly to the Corporation for National and Community Service through Serve DC.



Serve Your Country. Serve Your Community. Serve DC!

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10. Any retaliation, coercion, intimidation, threat, interference, or harassment for the filing of a grievance, or used to restrain a complainant from filing, is prohibited and should be reported immediately to the Training and Technical Assistance Manager.